

place with cayenne pepper or some other obnoxious substance, then set in a convenient place for the fowls to taste. If the fowls are provided, however, with a proper ration including plenty of oyster shell or lime in some other form and also a sufficiently large number of attractive and comfortable nest boxes well supplied with proper nesting material and placed in a somewhat darkened and secluded part of the coop, the cause of the trouble will be reduced to a minimum. If the few fowls that then acquire the habit are not considered too valuable for the dinner table and, as soon as discovered, are dispatched for this purpose little loss from egg eaters usually need be expected.

PREPARING FOWLS FOR MARKET

By C. G. Patterson of the Wasatch Produce Company.

By far the most important step in the preparation of fowls for the consumer is the manner of killing. The method of killing not only affects the plucking of the fowl, but will to a large degree affect the quality of the flesh. Chickens should not be chased before killing, as this is thought to have an unfavorable effect on the flavor and texture of the flesh. The best method of killing is probably by bleeding, and is described as follows:

Hold the head of the bird with the left hand, back of the head up, keeping the hand on the back of the neck to avoid cutting yourself should the knife slip and pass through the top of the head. Take the knife in the right hand, the back of the blade toward your body. Insert the blade in the mouth, keeping the point to the right side of the bird's neck and as near the outer skin as possible, until it is well past the neck bone. Then press the edge toward the bone and slowly draw the knife from the mouth, the hand moving from your body, so that the knife appears to pass across the neck. Repeat the process on the left side of the neck. This should cause the bird to bleed freely, but by holding the beak up the blood will remain in the neck, giving you plenty of time to pierce the brain. The latter is located just above the

eye and can be easily reached through the upper part of the mouth by using a stiff steel blade, inserted in the mouth with blade edge up and pointing slightly over the eyes. With young birds little trouble is experienced in piercing the brain, but with the older birds a very stiff blade is required, as the bones are much harder. When the point of the blade enters the brain, give the knife a quick twist to right or left to widen the aperture. If the brain has been reached the bird will attempt to squawk or will give a nervous jerk as the blade touches the spot, and this touching the brain or nerves not only loosens the feathers of the bird for dry plucking, but will greatly improve the appearance of scalded stock.

A weight, which may consist of an old tomato can half filled with stones and cement, is immediately attached by means of a wire hook to the lower part of the beak of the bird. Then by grasping the wings close to the back, the bird will not be able to flutter, and can be easily and rapidly plucked. This, of course, should always be done while the bird is bleeding. The can catches the blood, and by hanging the bird over a barrel the feathers may easily be saved.

Since there is considerable difficulty in scalding birds properly and it is often improperly done, dealers usually pay a little more for dry-plucked birds. The breast should be plucked first, starting near the crop. After the breast the thighs, then the back near the base of the tail, and lastly the wings. As soon as the feathers

have been removed the wings should be twisted over the back and the bird taken from the hooks and the feet washed, after which the thighs and legs should be pressed to the body either by placing a brick on the bird's breast or by tying the body, the object of this being to give the bird a plump or blocky appearance.

The birds should not be allowed to hang until they become rigid, as that causes them to look thin. Care must be taken that all animal heat has left the birds before they are packed for shipment, but this does not mean that it is necessary for them to hang while cooling. As a rule, the head and feet are left on and the entrails are not removed, but such details depend on the requirements of the market to which the birds are sent.

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